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War Stories: WW-II Veterans Share On the Ground Experiences

In a race against time, Thanasi Metropoulos '13 preserves a piece of WW-II history in the East Bay



A plaque of military honors behind them, Thanasi Metropoulos '13 stands with Ralph Cirillo in Cirillo's Bristol, R.I., home. Image Credit: James P. Jones, Photography RI

December 16, 2013 | Melissa A. Patricio

BRISTOL, R.I. -- In just over six months, the 70th anniversary of D-Day -- largely recognized as the beginning of the end of World War II -- will be recognized in countries around the world. Much of what Americans know about the U.S. involvement in WW-II, both in the European and Pacific Theaters, comes from the "official" history -- the records of military officers and government officials that was approved for publication in history textbooks across the country. What has been lost, however, is the on-the-ground accounts of enlisted men and women who saw the war from a much different perspective. Recent initiatives, including legislation to fund the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., have increased efforts to collect these oral histories in an attempt to create a more complete picture of a critical period of world history.

In 2011, Thanasi Metropoulos '13 began his own project to interview WW-II veterans living in the East Bay. Over the course of two years, he collected 15 oral histories that now reside in the [Rogers Free Library](#) in Bristol, R.I. More than just a passion project, Metropoulos has performed a public service -- with 800 WW-II vets lost each day to old age and illness, there is an urgent need to record their memories before they're lost forever.

For more on Metropoulos's project, read "[What They Left Behind](#)" in [RWU Magazine, Issue #9](#), and check out the video below and [this slideshow](#) below to meet some of the veterans he interviewed.

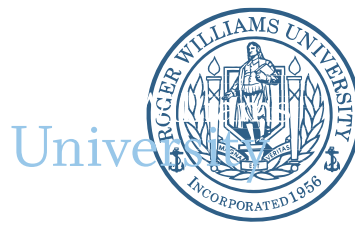
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